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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 56th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/49/38, A/49/176, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/217-E/1994/103, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/308, A/49/314 and Corr.1, A/49/327 and Corr.1, A/49/349, A/49/354, A/49/365-E/1994/119, A/49/378, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/506, A/49/532, A/49/587 and Corr.1; A/C.3/49/13, A/C.3/49/26)

1. Ms. PAIK (Republic of Korea) said that in view of the enthusiasm shown by the international community, she was confident that the Fourth World Conference on Women would result in the adoption by consensus of an action-oriented Platform for Action which would contribute to the building of a more equitable and sustainable society. In the hope that Governments would commit themselves to making the necessary institutional and financial arrangements, her delegation looked forward to the informal consultations to be held on the Platform for Action that week and to the preparatory meeting to be held in March 1995.

2. In order to find a lasting solution to the problem of women's inequality, it was necessary to listen carefully to what women all over the world had to say and to enhance their ability to improve their own status. The positive changes in women's status must be securely instituted, so that they were irreversible.

3. Education was the key to overcoming the marginalization of women. Not only was it important to ensure equal access to good education for women, but it was necessary to educate the general public in order to bring about the necessary changes in social relations and in attitudes.

4. Her country had actively taken steps to amend the educational system at all levels. The content of education had been altered to prevent the perpetuation of gender stereotyping. Some vocational colleges had changed admission policies to promote the participation of women in traditionally male-dominated job sectors. Her Government fully supported institutions which offered educational programmes promoting equitable representation of women in society.

5. Just as it was important to educate women about their rights, it was crucial to protect those rights. Regrettably, however, violence against women posed a major obstacle to their equality and advancement. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

6. Her Government had adopted a special law in January 1994 on the prevention of sexual violence and the protection of victims of such violence. The law stated that such violence was a criminal offence which would not be tolerated by the legal system or the public, and called for protective shelters and counselling for abused women. Her delegation strongly endorsed resolution 38/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women, hoped that the Secretary-General would do his utmost to facilitate collaboration between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights, and looked forward to receiving a report on the matter at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

7. Her delegation was pleased to hear that 138 States were now parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and hoped that universal ratification would be achieved in the years to come. She emphasized the need for a proper monitoring system and the importance of giving the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adequate meeting time and of taking appropriate steps to increase its effectiveness.

8. The number of women involved in decision-making in the public and private sectors was somewhat insignificant in most countries. Her delegation therefore believed that legal and institutional arrangements should be established in more concrete terms to promote the participation of women at all levels, particularly in higher level decision-making processes.

9. At the international level, the United Nations should set an example and give due consideration to women candidates from countries that were underrepresented. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/587) and stressed the responsibility and accountability of managers for its implementation. Member States should provide adequate resources and supply more comprehensive national rosters of women candidates. An effective communication mechanism between Member States and the Secretariat should be established.

10. On the question of the proposed merger of UNIFEM and INSTRAW, her delegation believed that the reorganization of economic and social activities should be pursued, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to work for the advancement of women. In addition, the new arrangement in which the Division for the Advancement of Women functioned under the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development should facilitate the inclusion of a gender perspective in all United Nations development policies.

11. Her delegation hoped that all participants at the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing would demonstrate the political will to cooperate in fulfilling the goals of the Nairobi Conference, in order to create a better world for all.

12. Ms. TOLLE (Kenya) said that Kenya, which had hosted the third World Conference on women in 1985, was once again actively involved at the national, regional and international levels in the preparations for the Beijing Conference. She hoped that the Beijing Conference would produce tangible results and that participants would demonstrate a sustained commitment both to implement the Platform for Action and to undertake the necessary follow-up.

13. The preparatory process in Kenya was progressing well under the National Coordinating Committee, the Steering Committee and the sectoral subcommittees. Kenya hoped that the Conference would take careful note of the areas where progress had been made and identify gaps and shortcomings that needed to be addressed, with a view to formulating the necessary remedial measures.

14. Kenya was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had set up a task force, consisting of men and women, to take a critical look at any laws which were discriminatory to women, with a view to making recommendations for their amendment or repeal.

15. Her Government had also developed a database to facilitate policy-making and planning to improve the status of women, and had elaborated a number of statistical indicators covering gender analysis in the following areas: adult education; employment and earnings in the formal and informal sectors; higher education and professional training; disability; literacy; primary and secondary education; law, order and justice; health; housing conditions, human settlements and the environment; and participation in community development, public affairs, politics and decision-making.

16. In order to secure equal conditions of employment between men and women in the civil service, the Government had introduced the payment of an allowance to married women. The Government continued actively to encourage increased participation of women in the various sectors of the economy. Statistics indicated that women predominated in the agricultural and informal sectors. The Government supported efforts by rural women to improve their lives through the formation of self-help and income-generating groups. Those measures were intended to provide women with equal opportunities for participation in the nation's economic, social, cultural, civil and political life.

17. Despite the progress achieved, however, her delegation was concerned at the deterioration of the situation of the majority of women in many countries where structural adjustment programmes had forced Governments to reduce expenditure in such vital sectors as health, education, water, sanitation and social services. It was for that reason that Kenya had always stressed the importance of providing safety nets to mitigate the social consequences of structural adjustment.

18. Access to education was crucial for the advancement of women, and a concerted effort was needed to ensure that the decline in economic growth in most developing countries did not adversely affect any gains that had been made in that area.

19. Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to join with the international community in promoting the advancement of women.

20. Ms. REGAZZOLI (Argentina) reviewed the action taken for the advancement of women in the region and listed the social, economic and political factors that had influenced the improvement of women's status, particularly their access to employment and education. The Latin American and Caribbean region was the only region where all countries had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In a region where the consolidation of democracy appeared to be closely linked to women's participation in decision-making and the exercise of power and in political life in general, it should be noted that Nicaragua had a woman President, Honduras and Costa Rica each had a woman Vice-President and the parliaments of Panama and Guatemala were both headed by a woman. Her country had done a great deal for the advancement of women. The current Government had taken steps to involve Argentine women more

closely in the national decision-making process, through the establishment of a national council for women, the formation of a team of women presidential advisers, and the setting of a minimum quota of 30 per cent women for lists of candidates for elective office presented by political parties. After extensive debate, the Constitution had been amended to take into account the provisions of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Congress had been given the authority to take corrective action to ensure de facto and de jure equality between men and women and the full exercise of women's rights as recognized by the Constitution and international instruments, and to guarantee full respect for their political rights by means of affirmative action in regulating lists of candidates presented by political parties and electoral provisions. All those initiatives had placed Argentina in the forefront of action by States for the advancement of women. Argentina had also signed and was in the process of ratifying the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States on 9 June 1994, which it considered to be a unique instrument, destined to do pioneering work in eliminating outdated behaviours and guaranteeing women the dignity to which they were entitled as human beings. In September 1994, Argentina had hosted the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, at which a regional programme of action had been finalized and adopted that was based on a concept of development integrating economic and social policies, out of concern for social equity and the strengthening of democracy in the region. The new programme advanced the idea that not only were the current situation and future prospects of Latin American and Caribbean women closely linked to the development of the countries of the region, but also they had a direct impact on society as a whole. It therefore recommended greater participation by women in the region's development, based on the following lines of action: equality between the sexes, sharing with women the responsibilities and benefits of development, combating the impoverishment of women, women's participation in decision-making and the exercise of power, human rights, peace and violence, sharing of family responsibilities, recognition of the region's cultural diversity and support and cooperation at the international level.

21. In conclusion, she stressed the importance for women the world over of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September 1995, which should provide an opportunity for States to become aware of the essential role played by women in the building of society, to recognize their contribution to history and to the future, and to pledge to give women more power in decision-making bodies and allow them greater participation in development on an equal footing with men.

22. Ms. FERTEKLIGIL (Turkey) said that the various United Nations conferences on women gave the international community an opportunity to address the issue in all its economic, political and social aspects, from the perspective of the goals set in 1985 by the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Turkey welcomed the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, which it viewed as a decisive meeting marking the beginning of a new era for the status of women. Careful preparation and effective follow-up were therefore essential.

23. Her delegation noted, however, that despite undeniable progress, the integration of women in development, as both agents and beneficiaries, left much to be desired throughout the world. Disparities existed not only between developed and developing countries, but also within countries. Whatever a nation's level of development, women continued to be one of the groups most vulnerable to the political, economic and social problems faced by societies. Women the world over still had many problems in common and remained the group most seriously affected by structural or short-term problems such as economic crisis and poverty.

24. Discrimination against women was still a reality in many fields, particularly education, vocational training, employment, health services, wages and protection of their rights, yet the full participation of women in the public and political life of society was an imperative for democracy and sustainable development.

25. Her delegation was aware of the important contribution made by the United Nations system to the advancement of women and was pleased that each United Nations organ gave a specific place in its work to the situation of women. She hoped that interest in the status of women would continue after the Beijing Conference.

26. She stressed the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for protecting women's interests, at a time when they were subject to all kinds of discrimination, of which the worst was undoubtedly physical violence. Violence against women was reprehensible in any form, but its most horrific manifestation was the violence systematically practised as part of a policy of ethnic cleansing, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That deplorable policy must be severely punished under international law and those responsible for such acts must be brought before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Turkey had signed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and it pledged its support to the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

27. Turkey gave an important place to women in its legislation and also in its five-year development plans, in order to enhance the status of both urban and rural women and protect their rights. Since 1992, the Government had included a Ministry of State for the Status of Women, which was headed by a woman minister. Turkey was proud to be one of the few countries governed by a woman Prime Minister. Turkish women were encouraged to exercise their political rights, especially the right to vote and to stand for political office. The Government was aware of how much remained to be done and was determined to spare no effort to translate legal measures for the advancement of women into socio-economic and cultural structures and to inform women about their rights and how they could protect them.

28. She commended the Division for the Advancement of Women and the secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women for the efforts they were making to prepare for that important contribution to the cause of women. She also commended the work of INSTRAW and UNIFEM and believed that the question of their merger should be studied carefully in all its aspects.

29. She also favoured better representation of women in the United Nations Secretariat, especially in managerial posts, and encouraged all measures to that end, since the United Nations should set an example.

30. Ms. GERGAB (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), while welcoming United Nations efforts to promote the rights of women and strengthen their role in society, expressed regret that in many countries, particularly developing countries, women were still under-represented in many sectors. Initial assessment of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies revealed that, while more and more countries recognized the need to eliminate discrimination against women, such discrimination still existed in many countries, regardless of their level of development. Her delegation emphasized the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was a major international instrument for promoting equality between men and women, and welcomed the fact that numerous countries had acceded to it.

31. She noted that at its twelfth session the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had considered the initial report of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on its implementation of the Convention. Members of the Committee had been well aware of the suffering endured by Libyan men and women as a result of the application of the sanctions imposed by a Security Council resolution, and had expressed concern at the effects of those sanctions on the status of women and children. Over 150 pregnant women and many children had died because they had not had access to medicines or had not been vaccinated. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attached considerable importance to the status of Libyan women. Laws existed for their protection and there were many advantages which enabled them to work on an equal footing with men, in terms of both remuneration and access to employment. Women also had a decision-making role in the social, political and economic spheres.

32. Her Government looked forward to the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women and hoped that participants would be able to evaluate the results achieved thus far in the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies and to adopt the necessary measures to fulfil those objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women which had yet to be achieved.

33. Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines) said that, in the context of his country's development efforts, a national plan for women had been put in place, along with institutional mechanisms for its implementation. Government policies, programmes and projects continued to be reviewed and revised to eliminate gender bias. Vehicles for more effective participation by women in policy- and decision-making processes also continued to be created.

34. His country fully supported the efforts of the United Nations system to create a global climate favourable to the empowerment of women. As the international community approached the Fourth World Conference on Women, it was most fitting to review the extent to which the Nairobi Strategies had been pursued and to assess the results achieved, particularly in the priority areas of equality, development and peace.

35. The technical and financial assistance given by the United Nations Development Fund for Women had enabled the Philippines to be considered a model of gender and developmental mainstreaming among Asian countries.

36. He drew attention to the problem of the movement of workers from developing countries to the more affluent ones, which had been fuelled to a great extent by the oil boom of the 1970s. The Philippines had become a major source of migrant labour, with women accounting for a large proportion of such migrants: in 1993, 55 per cent of documented Filipino overseas workers had been women.

37. In examining the problem of migrant women workers, it was necessary to take into account the existence of a global demand for gender-specific types of workers, such as domestics, nurses and "entertainers". It should also be noted that the decision to migrate was generally prompted by economic factors, especially the situation of the family, and that conditions of work for women migrant workers were qualitatively different from those of men. Women generally got lower-paying, unskilled jobs which were frequently not covered by protective labour laws, a situation which made them more vulnerable.

38. He noted that the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women migrant workers (A/49/354) dealt broadly with those aspects of the issue. However, he regretted that part IV of the report, on the incidence of violence against women migrant workers, had not gone into greater detail, and focused more on the typology of violence and abuse inflicted on women migrant workers.

39. He recalled that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had reaffirmed that the promotion of women's human rights constituted an integral part of the human rights activities of the United Nations, and that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development had called on all countries to take the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of exploitation and violence against women.

40. Women's search for higher-paying employment abroad gave rise to the nefarious practice of trafficking in women, as well as girl children and youth, largely from developing countries or from economies in transition. The practice involved forcibly recruiting or inveigling women and children into sexually or economically exploitative situations, for the profit of traffickers who were usually organized into syndicates. There were two types of illegal or clandestine traffic: trafficking for purposes of prostitution and other sex-related businesses such as sex tourism and mail-order brides, and clandestine or undocumented work in domestic service. In both cases, women were especially vulnerable. Deprived of their passports, they were kept ignorant of where they were to work and of the conditions of their employment and they were exploited and mistreated by their employers, to whom they were often in debt bondage.

41. The problem of trafficking raised a number of issues that must be considered by both sending and receiving countries. First, the restrictive immigration policies of receiving countries often created manpower gaps in vital areas of the economy which were filled by clandestine migration and trafficking in migrant workers. Second, despite the fact that foreign workers, documented and undocumented, were vital cogs in the economies of developed countries, they did not enjoy the same rights and status as the local workforce. Third, most of

the countries availing themselves of women migrant labour had not acceded, or were reluctant to accede, to internationally recognized labour and humanitarian standards.

42. He urged all States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Specific measures must be taken to respond to contemporary forms of trafficking in women, girl children and youth and the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others should be updated. He called on the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women to include in their programmes of action measures to deal with those problems. He also called on the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to criminalize trafficking and other forms of violence against women.

43. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that social justice was required in order to attain development goals and that women should be allowed to enjoy equal opportunities in all spheres of life. In most countries, women's rights either were violated or were subjected to many restrictions. As a result of their peripheral roles in social structures, women were unable to become an independent force and contribute to socio-economic objectives. The lack of security and equality for women must be combated, first in the family and then in the educational system and the workplace.

44. The absence of women in political associations and activities was also significant. In order to be able to promote their own rights, women must be allowed to hold decision-making positions at the national and international levels and to participate effectively in decision-making. Women would be able to play a larger role in development if laws discriminating against them were eliminated, special laws were enacted to support groups of women, prejudices were gradually eliminated through information and education, resources for women's activities were fairly allocated and responsibilities were appropriately assigned.

45. The international community's anxiety over violence against women made it focus greater attention on the violation of women's rights. The numerous instances of violence and rape perpetrated against Bosnian and Palestinian women were only a symptom of the present social and cultural crisis and of the decline of humanism.

46. The Fourth World Conference on Women should focus on finding practical solutions for overcoming the obstacles to the advancement of women and on ways of enhancing the crucial role of women in the family, social and economic sectors and other development oriented activities.

47. The Islamic Republic of Iran had consistently supported the participation of women in political, economic, cultural and social affairs, including the enactment of appropriate legislation. At present, a large proportion of the country's experts were women. Women had access to education, including higher education. In recent years the Office of Women's Affairs, which was responsible for coordinating services for rural women, had focused its activities on the

development of comprehensive education tailored to the needs of rural women. As a result of that effort, which had been enhanced by the establishment of the Office of Rural Women's Affairs within the Ministry of Agriculture, the rate of literacy among rural women had increased by 18 per cent. A growing number of Iranian women were occupying professional positions, and women were increasingly participating in elections, a fact which demonstrated their interest in socio-political affairs. Many women had been entering medicine and related fields, and the Islamic Consultative Assembly had recently enacted a law which allocated 25 to 50 per cent of places at medical schools to women.

48. His delegation stressed the need for international cooperation with respect to the advancement of women and welcomed the fact that the International Year of the Family observed in 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in 1995 had emphasized the central role played by women. Several national committees mainly composed of women had thus been established and had generated positive action plans. The national reports, seminars, conventions and exhibitions geared to women's activities had drawn attention to the need for improved policies and programmes.

49. Mrs. KHURSHID (Pakistan) said that, despite all the human rights instruments which had explicitly upheld women's right to be equal partners with men in all spheres of national activity and notwithstanding the progressive legislation adopted by nations on discrimination against women, a vast majority of women continued to face violations of their rights, violence and poverty. Some 500,000 women died every year from pregnancy-related causes, almost 700 million women were illiterate world wide and girls represented 70 per cent of the 130 million children who were not enrolled in schools. Moreover, women and children suffered the most from the adverse consequences of structural adjustment programmes which forced Governments to slash spending, especially health and education budgets.

50. The platform for action to be adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women should be concise, focused and action-oriented; to achieve that goal, the Conference's efforts should be guided by three principles. First, relationships between individuals should be viewed in the context of the societies they lived in, as that would eliminate piecemeal efforts. Second, a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach should be adopted; hence, the poor and the dispossessed should be the starting-point. Third, women should participate actively in the formulation and implementation of measures affecting them.

51. Pakistan, for its part, was making efforts in the legal, educational and cultural spheres to enhance the status of women and was providing them with opportunities to participate in national life on an equal footing with men. Under the Constitution, all citizens were equal, and no gender-based discrimination was tolerated. The Government of Pakistan was also committed to repealing all discriminatory laws and to signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Twenty-five seats in the national assembly had been reserved for women and a specific percentage of government jobs had been set aside for women. Women's representation in the criminal justice system had been increased and police stations staffed by women had been set up. Pakistan had launched a massive programme to integrate women

into the mainstream of national development. The Ministry of Women's Development had established five committees on legal rights, legal aid, slums, prisons and accidents to protect women's rights. The Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women had submitted 283 recommendations (which were being implemented by the Government) covering effective safeguards for women's rights, provision of health, education and employment to women and integration of minority women into national life. The First Women's Bank, with 23 branches in all provinces, was staffed and run exclusively by women. It provided credit to women, tried to develop entrepreneurship, create employment opportunities and generate savings for women. With the assistance of foreign donors, a number of development projects had been started for training women in horticulture and the use of computers and for monitoring women's development programmes. Non-governmental organizations received support from the Government for community development programmes.

52. Pakistan had also planned broad-based activities for its participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women and had set up a national committee which was addressing various issues relating to women.

53. Violence against women was the result of the lower status accorded to women, discriminatory laws and poor enforcement of existing laws. Public debates were being held at the national and international levels to devise ways and means of addressing the issue. However, sometimes violence against women was sponsored by States themselves and it became a serious threat to the life, safety and dignity of women in some parts of the world. In some situations of armed conflict, systematic rape had become a weapon of war. Women were the victims of brutal and degrading treatment in the Balkans, the Caucasus and many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, not to mention Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Serb forces had used rape as an instrument of "ethnic cleansing". Instead of merely issuing condemnatory statements against violence, the international community should take measures to stop such atrocities. First, the offending States should be prevailed upon to provide immediate access to human rights organizations to investigate reports of violence against women; second, upon verification of such reports, the international human rights machinery should request the offending State to give a full account of its actions; and, third, the State officials responsible for such crimes should be prosecuted.

54. In the state of Jamnu and Kashmir, women and girls were being subjected to systematic and persistent violence, as had been confirmed by international human rights organizations and by non-governmental organizations, which had reported abductions, molestation, rape and gang rape perpetrated by Indian security forces in various Kashmiri towns and villages. She cited in that connection an excerpt from a report compiled by Asia Watch and stated that during the preceding five-year period, more than 4,500 women and girls of all ages had been raped.

55. India was guilty of deliberate and systematic violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, and Protocol II Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which, inter alia, prohibited rape. Nevertheless, India was using rape as a weapon of oppression and subjugation in Kashmir, and its crime was going unpunished. The international community must exert pressure on India to allow

international human rights organizations to investigate the violence perpetrated against women in Kashmir and the instances of rape by the security forces, and cooperate in bringing those guilty of such crimes to justice.

56. Mr. KIM (People's Democratic Republic of Korea) said that although there was still a great deal to be done towards achieving the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, it was encouraging to note that questions affecting women had assumed greater prominence in the consciousness of the international community. That augured well for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, which would provide an excellent opportunity for the international community not only to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, but also to draw up a concrete and action-oriented programme in order to achieve the three objectives of equality, development and peace.

57. As it was particularly important to guarantee the fundamental rights of women through legislation, his Government had, in 1946, promulgated the Law on Equality of Men and Women, followed by the Law on the Family, the Law on Public Health, the Law on Child Nutrition and Education and other measures taken by the Government to guarantee the dignity and the rights of women in law as well as in practice. Currently, 20.1 per cent of the members of the Supreme People's Assembly were women, and many women were playing a major role in decision-making at the highest levels in politics and management. His delegation appreciated the efforts of UNIFEM, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies to eliminate illiteracy among women in various parts of the world and ensure equality of opportunity between men and women in education and professional training.

58. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 (A/49/349), on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/49/308) and on Violence against Migrant Women Workers (A/49/354).

59. Violence against women was the most cruel and degrading form of violence; his delegation fully supported the efforts of the United Nations to eliminate it and to highlight the importance of assistance to the victims of such violence. In that connection, his delegation noted with satisfaction the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (resolution 48/104) and the appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women as a follow-up measure to implement the recommendations of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. His delegation associated itself particularly with article 4 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Furthermore, the resolution adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its third session in Vienna in 1994 had requested the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to consider, as a separate item, the issue of combating violence against women; that was a clear demonstration of the political will within the international community to combat the abhorrent practice.